

February 20, 2015

Connecticut General Assembly  
Transportation Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2300  
300 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: SB No. 495, HB No. 6343

To Transportation Committee Members:

My testimony.

**I support SB 495** to fund a genuinely comprehensive independent study (that is independent of the Housatonic Railroad marketing study) to determine the need for passenger service on CT State Tracks, leased by the Housatonic Railroad.

**It is premature to consider the Bill HB 6343** and should not be supported.

For many years the tracks have needed upgrades and improvements, as demonstrated by multiple derailments. The most recent was during the week of February 16, 2015 in the center of North Canaan which closed traffic along RT 44.

Providing passenger transportation would duplicate the Metro North line services to New York which is already available to community members in the NW Connecticut towns. Each Metro station provides short term and long-term parking and well lit areas with regular established service.

The Metro North train trip to New York takes as little as two hours. Multiple stations for the Metro North are accessible from North Canaan and south to Kent and are accessed by driving to the stations which takes anywhere from 25 minutes to as little as 7 minutes. This is the same time it takes for many of us to drive to a grocery store.

We are rural and we have many track crossing along our corridor that do not have safety signals, nor lighting, nor safe tracks. On many levels, over the years, the Housatonic Railroad has decided not to take responsibility for negative effects to the community; as an example, not improving rail tracks that have caused home structures to be compromised by the deficient track infrastructure, in addition to multiple derailments.

Amtrack travels from Pittsfield MA to NY City daily.  
Busses travel from Pittsfield MA to NY City daily.  
Metro North travels from Amenia/Wassaic to NYC Daily

After living in West Cornwall for 38 Years, and having a family member ride the Metro North daily for the past ten years, I know first hand we do not need another parallel railway.

I would like to see the millions of dollars, available for transportation infrastructure, spent on existing roads, bridges and highways.

We live in a time of fiscal constraints and budget shortfalls. It's a challenging time and our mental health services, our services for the elderly, our services for our children, educational services and our services for so many families in need of daily support is needed! It is not the time to spend money on the Housatonic Railroad. We don't need duplicate train transportation services to NYC.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Heiny